

Listing of Claims:

1. – 5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) A validator of access to a service by a rechargeable voucher, the validator including:

means for reading the voucher identification number,

means for recharging the voucher by writing into the voucher's recordable data storage means, and

means for storing a list of approved voucher identification numbers representing the vouchers that have been approved for automatic recharge, wherein when a voucher holder presents a voucher to the validator, the validator compares the identification number of the presented voucher to said list of approved voucher identification numbers stored in said means for storing and automatically recharges the presented voucher without any intervention or action by the voucher holder when the identification number of the presented voucher is on said list of approved voucher identification numbers.

7. (Previously presented) A system for managing rechargeable voucher accounts, the system comprising:

a central station for managing the status of the rechargeable voucher accounts and maintaining and updating a first list of approved voucher identification numbers representing a list of vouchers for which the voucher holder has paid for a recharge; and

a plurality of service access validation stations comprising validators, in communication with the central station, the central station periodically transmitting at least a portion of said first list of voucher identification numbers that have been approved for automatic recharge to at least some selected service access validation stations, wherein said validator comprises means for storing said first list and when a voucher holder presents a voucher to a validator, said validator compares the identification number of the presented voucher to said first list of voucher

identification numbers and automatically recharges the presented voucher without any intervention or action by the voucher holder when the identification number of the presented voucher is on said first list of voucher identification numbers and provides the voucher holder an access to the service.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 7, wherein the central station's management of the status of the rechargeable voucher accounts includes receiving payments from rechargeable voucher account holders for authorizing future automatic recharge of the voucher account holder's vouchers and upon said payment, providing the voucher account holders an option to provide an indication about to which service access validation station he intends to go first.

10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 7, wherein a number of rechargeable vouchers are designated to be automatically recharged periodically during a time window at the end of each defined period, each such voucher automatically recharged by the validator when a voucher holder presents a such voucher to the validator to gain access to a service at the end of said defined period is automatically recharged by the validator and the validator generating a second list of voucher identification numbers representing the recharged vouchers and periodically transmitting said second list of voucher identification numbers to the central station, the voucher validity being then checked by the central station by comparing the second list of recharged vouchers to said first list of voucher identification numbers for which the recharge has been paid, the central station then generating a third list of voucher identification numbers representing the vouchers that have been recharged but not paid for, said third list of voucher identification numbers being periodically transmitted to at least some of the validators, to enable the validators to totally or partially inhibit any unpaid vouchers.

11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 7, wherein the system automatically determines according to a statistic criteria certain service access validation stations to which a particular voucher is likely to be presented.

12. (Previously presented) A method for managing the status of rechargeable voucher accounts, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving payments by a central station from rechargeable voucher holders for recharging their vouchers;

the central station maintaining and updating at least one list of approved voucher identification numbers representing a list of vouchers for which the voucher holder has paid for a recharge;

periodically transmitting at least a portion of the list of approved voucher identification numbers from the central station to at least some selected service access validation stations, said validation stations comprising a validator configured to store said list;

when a rechargeable voucher holder presents a voucher to the validator to gain access to the service, the validator comparing the identification number of said presented voucher to said list of approved voucher identification numbers stored in the validator;

the validator automatically recharging the presented voucher without any intervention or action by the voucher holder when the identification number of the presented voucher is on the list of approved voucher identification numbers; and

providing the voucher holder an access to the service.

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 7, wherein the central station further maintaining a list of banned voucher identification numbers representing a list of vouchers that are not to be honored at any service access validation station.

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 10, wherein the central station further maintaining a fourth list of voucher identification numbers that are designated to be automatically recharged periodically during a time window at the end of each defined period but were not presented to any validator during said time window, the central station transmitting said fourth list to the validators at the end of said time window so that those vouchers will be recharged next time any of them are presented to a validator.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising the central station maintaining and updating a list of banned voucher identification numbers representing a list of vouchers that are not to be honored at any service access validation station.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
designating a number of rechargeable vouchers to be automatically recharged periodically during a time window at the end of each defined period;
automatically recharging each such vouchers when a voucher holder presents such voucher to a validator to gain access to a service during the time window at the end of said defined period.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
the validator generating a second list of voucher identification numbers representing the recharged vouchers;
periodically transmitting said second list of voucher identification numbers to the central station;
the central station comparing the second list of voucher identification numbers to said first list of voucher identification numbers for which the recharge has been paid;
the central station generating a third list of voucher identification numbers representing the vouchers that have been recharged but not paid for; and
the central station periodically transmitting said third list of voucher identification numbers to at least some of the validators to enable the validators to totally or partially inhibit any unpaid vouchers.